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FEDERAL UPDATE

National Trust Testifies in Support of SAT and Preserve America Authorization in House

National Trust Vice President for Public Policy, Emily Wadhams, testified before the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands in support of HR 3891, a bill authorizing two key historic preservation programs — Preserve America (PA) and Save America's Treasures (SAT) — on April 24th.

Wadhams' testimony emphasized the importance of moving forward with Congress' ongoing commitment to the SAT program in particular, and that "without it would be virtually impossible to stimulate private matching contributions and hard to imagine where else the money would come from to preserve our national heritage." Wadhams also highlighted the synergy between the PA and SAT programs in saving historic and cultural resources, and noted that "SAT bricks-and-mortar recipients benefit greatly from Preserve America awards that provide funds for the planning process needed to qualify for SAT support, as well as essential education and outreach activities to increase the value of an SAT-funded restoration."

SAT was established a decade ago to celebrate the millennium and highlight the importance of history in marking the 21st century. With broad bi-partisan support in Congress, the leadership of two First Ladies, and the continuing support and leadership of both the Clinton and Bush administrations, SAT has proved to be a phenomenal success and has provided more than \$264 million in federal challenge grants to 1,024 historic preservation projects through 2007.

However, even with all of its tremendous success and support, SAT and PA are unauthorized and tenuously funded from year-to-year through the annual appropriations process. Wadhams stated that "the National Trust is urging Congress to authorize SAT and PA with a long-term programmatic and funding vision that would enable both programs to work in harmony with the other components of the national historic preservation program. Authorization [of SAT] would codify the successful implementation and practices of a ten-year old initiative along with its newer partner [PA], and I think that this is a step in the right direction."

To read the complete text of Ms. Wadhams' testimony, please visit http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/federal-funding/additional-resources/PA_SAT_House_Authorization_Bill_testimony_EW.pdf.

Farm Bill Conference Extended One Week But White House Veto Threat Still Looms

Congressional Farm Bill negotiators came closer to a final conference agreement this week, but not close enough to meet its self-imposed April 25th

Needed in Both
Chambers to
Override
President's Veto
and Save Historic
Preservation
Provisions
Contained in
Farm Bill

deadline. However, they are expected to hammer out a final agreement by next week; in turn, President Bush agreed to sign an extension until May 2nd. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) originally requested a two-week extension, but Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) refused to vote for such an extension.

The sticking point for the bill (H.R. 2419) has been the measure's overall funding and its tax credit provisions. Based on press reports and discussions with staff, negotiators have come to a compromise on the tax credit measure, which is expected to include an extension of the conservation easement tax credit.

Although Farm Bill conferees are expected to finalize an agreement by next week, the White House has threatened to veto the conference report because a measure in the bill would direct stock traders to report how much clients pay for stocks — a provision that would generate around \$6 billion for new farm bill funding.

The National Trust is continuing to monitor discussions and meet with conferees and their staff to encourage them to include the strongest historic preservation possible in the final Farm Bill conference report.

Interior Department Announces First Round of Centennial Parks Projects

First Round of
Centennial
Projects Includes
Restoration of
Key Historic and
Cultural
Resources in the
National Parks

On Thursday, April 24th, Department of Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne and National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar joined Members of Congress, including House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), on the West Steps of the Capitol to announce the first round of National Park Centennial Projects. Unfortunately, no speakers referred directly to historic preservation.

The National Trust is pleased the following projects were included in the first round:

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park (TN and NC)* - A project to restore, preserve and interpret the Elkmont Historic District.
- *Boston National Historical Park (MA)* - A project to restore and rehabilitate the Old State House.
- *Petrified Forest National Park (AZ)* - A project to inventory cultural resources throughout the park for visitor enjoyment.
- *Mesa Verde National Park (CO)* - For an archeological demographic study of the Mesa Verde Village.
- *Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site (CO)* - A project to create

“Trading Territory” Interpretive Trail. The National Trust for Historic Preservation providing some of the matching funds for this project.

The Centennial Initiative is designed to enhance the National Parks leading up to its 100th Anniversary in 2016. The Initiative will be funded from three sources:

- Commitment Government funding of \$100 million per year over 10 years (\$1 billion over 10 years) of which, among other things, would be used to restore historic and cultural sites for public enjoyment, improve parks, hire additional seasonal National Park Rangers, interpreters, and maintenance workers; repair buildings; improve natural landscapes; and encourage more children to join the Junior Ranger Program.
- Challenge funding of \$100 million per year from private funds for signature projects and programs.
- Matching funds requested from Congress to match the private funds dollar for dollar, up to \$100 million each year in mandatory funds for ten years. The House version of funding legislation, H.R 3094, the National Park Centennial Fund Act, is scheduled to be marked-up in the Natural Resources Committee on May 7th.

In FY 2008, the Department of the Interior received \$25 million for the Centennial Challenge Grants and provided an additional \$100 million for the other part of the Centennial Initiative that was marked by Secretary Kempthorne’s pledge to increase park operating budgets by 3%, with the bulk of this money going towards hiring seasonal rangers. The additional \$100 million came from other accounts within the National Park Service budget such as line-item construction, which was cut by 80%.

To learn more about the Centennial Initiative and the first round of projects, visit www.nps.gov/2016.

STATE & LOCAL UPDATE

Historic Rehab Credit Extension Moves in Colorado Legislature

With the Colorado state historic rehabilitation tax credit set to expire in 2009, the legislature is working on an extension of the program through 2020 in the form of HB 1033, with lead sponsors Rep. Claire Levy and Senator Martin Sandoval. Earlier this month, the House passed HB 1033, and it is now making its way through the Senate. The Senate Finance Committee held a hearing last Tuesday on HB 1033 and approved the bill by a vote of 5-0, and then the measure moved to the Senate Appropriations Committee, which gave it's

approval on April 25th.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Colorado Municipal League, and Colorado Preservation, Inc. all strongly support the extension of the Colorado rehab credit. The program provides a 20% credit to both income-producing and homeowner rehab projects.

The full text of the bill can be viewed at

http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2008A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/10BE4642A48EAC288725738400790831?Open&file=1033_ren.pdf